

Business Week. This year marks the 47th annual Small Business Week, during which we honor the immense contributions of entrepreneurs, their companies, and their workforce to our country.

Our Nation's economic rebirth relies on the ability of our community businesses to innovate, develop, and market solutions that deliver measurable value to their clients. Their growth and success creates up to 80 percent of new jobs in our Nation, including 25,000 already this month.

As a former business owner, I recognize today's many challenges, including getting access to capital, lowering energy costs, funding R&D, workforce training, and improving efficiencies.

When I host Small Business Federal Resource Seminars in my district, I encourage community businesses to connect with Federal agencies whose resources and programs could be useful to their operations, including—I have the SBA come out and share information with our businesses about 504 and 7(a) and Express loan programs. We also talk about small business development tools from the SBDCs.

The IRS is available to provide information about small business tax incentives, which include 179 expense provisions and bonus depreciation, the NOL carryback that has already refunded \$2.6 billion to small businesses that had been in the stimulus, so that as they had been profitable in previous years, they can get those dollars back at a time they need to cover payroll and operating expenses. There are also tax credits for health care, which the IRS elaborates on as well.

The Commerce Department talks about export programs, and the Department of Energy talks about Webinars and grants, tools, and incentives for energy development and energy efficiencies.

Small firms are the engine of our U.S. innovation and competitiveness, producing 13 times more patents for employees than those in larger firms. And they support our communities. In addition to goods, jobs, and services, small firms invest in local real estate. Their suppliers grow as they grow, and they contribute to charities and provide leadership and mentoring services to their neighbors.

To help small firms weather the recession and access the capital that is critical to their growth, Congress and the SBA have stepped up. The Recovery Act included \$288 billion worth of tax cuts, not just to 95 percent of working Americans, our consumers, but business incentives as well, including bonus depreciation, 179 expensing, the NOL carryback, and capital gains exclusions for small business stock. The first-time home buyer tax credit helped bring 700,000 new buyers back into the market.

This broad-based stimulus went further with infrastructure investment in roads, bridges, energy, and water projects, and included investments in

education, smart grid technology, and health IT.

We have seen a positive return. GDP growth has gone from negative 6 to positive 6 since the stimulus, and U.S. manufacturing is now growing at its fastest pace since 2006. While these signs of recovery are encouraging, more needs to be done.

Creditworthy businesses need to have access to working capital, and many need to restructure their debt in the months and years ahead. When businesses can't access financing, they delay contracts, hiring, equipment purchases, and other expansions.

The Recovery Act provided higher guarantees and reduced fees on SBA 7(a) and 504 loans. Since its passage SBA has driven over \$27 billion in small business loans into the hands of our community businesses, yet many are still struggling to access affordable capital. Banks are operating under tightened lending standards and have greater risk aversion and greater exposure to the instability of the commercial real estate market.

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Their strained balance sheets make it difficult to continue extending credit, where appropriate, to small businesses.

The experience of the Recovery Act has shown that the SBA guarantee can make a difference for an entrepreneur in need of capital. When it comes to Congress' approach to fostering recovery, every week must be Small Business Week.

My colleagues and I will continue to address the capital access gap with measures we move forward in the weeks ahead. Congresswoman DAHLKEMPER and I have a bipartisan measure to increase the maximum loan size and guarantee on the SBA express loan, a critical tool that provides working capital so firms can restock inventory and make new hires.

Today I introduced the Small Business Asset Investment and Modernization Act, which will enhance the SBA 504 loan program for commercial real estate, buildings, and heavy equipment.

Businesses are facing a collateral program as their loans mature and their equity is down in value. Many small business owners obtained loans during the bubble, getting loans at inflated appraised values on their property or with balloon payment structures. Banks are reluctant to restructure debt, particularly if the borrower is equity challenged or if the bank is capital challenged.

My bill will temporarily enable business owners to refinance their commercial real estate debt through the 504 program, addressing an acute near-term need in that sector. Over the next few weeks, I look forward to advancing these and other initiatives to help our growing businesses get the capital they need.

I urge my colleagues to join us in moving forward on further programs to

support the work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit of our small businesses, the cornerstone of our economy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OUT OF AFGHANISTAN CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, in the year 2005, I joined my colleagues and fellow Californians, MAXINE WATERS and BARBARA LEE, and other strong progressives in forming the Out of Iraq Caucus. That group was critical in galvanizing support for an end to the Iraq war and a return of our troops safely home.

Before we formed the Out of Iraq Caucus, Mr. Speaker, questioning the occupation of Iraq was considered a political death wish, but because we had the courage to speak out and to organize, ours became a firmly mainstream position. Without the work we did and the pressure we applied and the growth of our Out of Iraq Caucus, we would not be poised for redeployment out of Iraq later this year.

It's now time for those of us who oppose the war in Afghanistan—a bloc that's growing every single day—to do the same thing. I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to join the new Out of Afghanistan Caucus, formally launched by my friend Mr. CONYERS from Michigan.

As Afghanistan becomes more bloody, more expensive, and, frankly, more hopeless, we must rally with the same sense of purpose and fearlessness as we did in 2005 in the debate over Iraq. Every day, it seems, brings more bad news out of Afghanistan. The United States death toll has topped 1,000. According to news reports, for the first time we now have more troops in Afghanistan than we do in Iraq, and the combined costs of both wars is fast approaching \$1 trillion—that's trillion with a "T," Mr. Speaker.

The American people are losing patience with this war, and who can blame them? For 8½ years, they have sent their finest men and women and their hard-earned taxpayer dollars halfway around the world only to find that the Taliban is resurgent, the terrorist threat remains strong, and Afghanistan remains mired in corruption, violence, and poverty. At just the moment when we need to draw down, we are doubling down. We're pouring thousands of troops into Kandahar for an all-eggs-in-one-basket offensive that no one seems confident will succeed.

With all that in mind, how can we, in the House of Representatives, not

speak with a louder and more unified voice against this war? But we in the Out of Afghanistan Caucus are not calling for an abandonment of the country. We just believe that a military occupation, which has had nearly a decade to work, can't achieve the objectives of stability and security for the Afghan people.

What we need is diplomacy. We need humanitarian aid, support for democracy building and civil society programs. What we need are more resources for agriculture, education, and infrastructure. These are the tools of a smart security strategy that can empower the Afghan people in a way that sheds no more blood.

Mr. Speaker, warfare has only led to more warfare, emboldening the very enemy we're trying to defeat. A peaceful civilian surge is actually the only answer.

I ask my colleagues to join me in becoming a part of the Out of Afghanistan Caucus and help bring our troops home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes. (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

UKRAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the people of Ukraine have been struggling to achieve a fair, independent, and strong democracy since the oppressive Soviet yoke was shed in 1991, but recent events in the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporozhia have raised alarm.

A seven-foot tall statue of Joseph Stalin, the World War II Communist tyrant of the Soviet Union who was responsible for the Holodomor famine genocide in which millions upon millions of people starved to death, as well as the deaths of millions of Ukrainians, Poles, Russians, and so many others inside that tyranny, has been built outside of the city in front of the Communist Party headquarters. Even worse, Zaporozhia authorities just denied opposition groups the right to assemble to object to the statue's public display.

Since World War II, the world has come to know that Joseph Stalin killed over 50 million people inside those borders, and the repressive legions that supported him were responsible for

such agony for so many. The elevation of Joseph Stalin with a monument is an affront to those who have fought for freedom around the world. Just as a monument to Adolf Hitler in Germany would be unacceptable, freedom lovers simply cannot stand by silently while a monument to Stalin, the mass murderer of the 20th century, is erected in Ukraine.

The story of U.S. citizen Eugenia Sakevych-Dallas, a survivor of the famine genocide in Ukraine, can clearly express how Ukraine and her people were treated under the iron fist of Joseph Stalin. She describes herself as a survivor of the forced famine in Ukraine of 1932-1933. She recounts: It is with tears of joy for the future and salty tears of pain for the past that I write this account of my survival. It is the bone-chilling nightmare of every child to have their parents dragged away by force, never to see them again; siblings sent to prisons, parents sent to their deaths.

She was born in Mykolaiv Oblast and came from a happy family living off the land, but that happiness was stolen when, at the age of 5, they were forced to give away their home, their land was confiscated, and all their domestic animals were taken from them. Like many Ukrainians, they were left on the streets to starve. They were called "Kulacs"—enemy of the people. Her father was arrested first. The Communists came and picked up her family one by one, leaving her an orphan, an orphan crying with unbearable psychological wounds, alone, afraid, and starving.

She remembers her beloved mother during that time trying to feed the children, doing what any mother would do to care for her offspring. She found a few rotten potatoes in a field, and, for this, Stalin's lieutenants arrested her and she was sent to Siberia. The prisons during that time were overpopulated with people who had done nothing but try to survive.

Memories flood back to her, as do tears, and she remembers the long, long lines of men waiting for stale, molding half loaves of bread for hours upon hours. Etched in her mind is one man whom she did not even know that finally reached the end of the line and, with starvation in his eyes, grabbed the little loaf and started to bite into it, swallowing it as fast as he could and then dropping dead right in front of her.

Starvation is an odd thing, she writes. An empty stomach taking in bread is like swallowing cement. It does not absorb the nutrients. It hardens and kills the human body. I lost my dear sister to starvation, a forced death, legalized murder, or murder that the Communists, at Stalin's behest, decided was mercy killing.

They were constantly on the run while her family was being picked off one by one by the Communists. And as starvation took hold of the Ukrainian people, hatred filled their hearts for

Soviet Moscow. Many faces still haunt her today—the trains of people, families, old, young, starving, sick, hauled off with standing room only in those box crates. She became one of the children of the street, one of the few survivors of that tragic time in history who ate grass, pinecones, and anything that was chewable in the shadows, afraid that they might be taken away. People were begging, starving, eating anything they could find—a dead horse if they were lucky. Thousands of people were falling over dead, millions upon millions of innocent people killed under the Communists.

It was a sad time in history where, during the height of the famine, Ukrainian villagers were dying at the rate of 17 per minute, 1,000 per hour, and 25,000 per day, leaving only a few survivors to keep the history alive. They were stacked up like logs.

The horror and panic of that time of tyranny is still with her. The hunger that plagued Russia and tortured the Ukrainian people in their scheme to slaughter and take over and annihilate the middle class, she says, Let us not forget. It is our duty to bring the memories and truth to the world. We must expose the hardships, the horrors, and the truths so that these atrocities never can happen again.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BOOZMAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SENIORS TASK FORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Caucus feels very strongly that seniors in America count and, in so doing, created a Seniors Task Force co-chaired ably by Congresswoman SCHAKOWSKY of Illinois and Congresswoman MATSUI of California. And we thought it was fitting tonight, this being the month in which we honor seniors, to spend an hour talking about the seniors of America.

There are 45 million seniors in this country, and they have the right to ask us what have we done for them lately. And tonight, we're going to ask that question, and we're going to answer it.

First of all, I think we should focus in on Wall Street, and our message is